Special Supplement

CASE STUDIES OF DEMOCRATIC RENEWAL IN PRACTICE

Supplement to First Edition of PGA’s Renewal Roundup: A Bimonthly Update on Democracy Developments

October 2019
For our inaugural newsletter, we have included a special supplement compiling case studies of how PGA is supporting Democratic Renewal in Practice!

Is your story of PGA action included? If not, get in touch to be featured on our website and in upcoming newsletters by emailing:

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PGA’s unique global membership base amplifies the voices of legislators who support democratic transitions.

For example, on April 11, 2019, amid reports that his repressive and brutal 30-year regime was brought to an end and all political prisoners released in Khartoum, PGA’s members from around the world issued a statement welcoming the stepping-down and house-arrest of President Omar al-Bashir in Sudan. At this crucial juncture for Sudan, and amid uncertainty about the role to be played by the military in the country’s future governance, PGA called upon all relevant parties engaged to help promote a democratic transition to government protective of the rights of citizens and respectful of the rule of law.
The success of the opposition in recent elections in the **Maldives** brought hope of progress toward reinstating genuine democratic forces in the Parliament. Prior to the elections, one of PGA’s leading members, Hon. Ahmed Mahloof, was on trial for fabricated and politically-motivated criminal charges aimed at removing him from Parliament and public life. In response to his imprisonment, PGA members from countries with significant tourism in the Maldives appealed to their Governments to pressure the increasingly repressive Maldivian leadership to uphold higher standards of democracy and human rights. Following the September 2018 change of leadership, all charges against Mr. Mahloof were dropped, and he now serves as a minister in the new government. Mr. Mahloof thanked PGA for the letters and statements issued over the last four years, stressing that PGA’s campaigning for human rights, democracy, and justice was instrumental to his empowerment as an elected MP. These developments in the Maldives demonstrate how targeted parliamentary action and advocacy at a global level can provide leverage for substantive change.
Combatting Sexism, Harassment, and Violence Against Women Parliamentarians

PGA's peer-to-peer model provides solidarity for advocates against discrimination.

In response to PGA's advocacy around a study about acts of sexism, abuse and violence against women in parliaments in Europe, Dip. Carla Pitiot, PGA board member from Argentina, was inspired to mobilize her parliamentary colleagues for a Declaration to give visibility to sexism, harassment, and violence against women in Parliaments, which became the global rallying cry, #NotInMyParliament.
Denouncing Politically Motivated Arrests and Persecution of Opposition Leaders

PGA’s international network provides a global platform to draw attention to and oppose persecution of parliamentarians and opposition leaders. In Brazil, PGA condemned the forced exile of its National Group Chair, LGBTI Rights activist Dip. Jean Wyllys. PGA has helped Dep. Wyllys liaise with third parties (to enhance the protection of his human rights as an elected parliamentarian). With PGA’s support, PGA Members across European Party Groups also introduced a pivotal resolution condemning the gross human rights violations perpetrated in Cameroon, including politically-motivated arrests of civil society dissidents and opposition members, such as former presidential candidate and eminent jurist Prof. Maurice Kamto.
In February 2019, PGA condemned the continued detention in The Philippines of PGA Member Sen. Leila de Lima, a fierce critic of Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte, on politically-motivated drug trafficking charges in apparent retaliation for leading a Senate inquiry into the “drug war” killings. Former PGA Board Member, Ms. Barbara Lochbihler, MEP (Germany), co-authored a joint motion for a resolution adopted by the European Parliament, urging the Government of the Philippines to put a halt to its abusive practices violating the Rule of Law, democracy, and respect for human rights, and calling for Sen. de Lima’s release and guarantee of fair trial. Sen. de Lima issued a press release thanking PGA.
In mid-August 2019, the Chair of the PGA UK National Group, Mr. Mark Pritchard, MP, is making a field mission to Manila on behalf of the All Party Parliamentary Group on the Abolition of the Death Penalty to mobilize support against the reinstatement of the capital punishment promoted by the regime of President Duterte. In August 2019, Mr. Pritchard met PGA members in the Philippines and discuss ways and means of global action in support of the cause of democracy and human rights in the Filipino archipelago.

PGA has repeatedly intervened as the situation facing human rights defenders, civil society activists, and opposition leaders in Venezuela has become more dire. PGA’s National Group in Venezuela supported the June
2018 report on human rights violations from the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and National Group Chair Dip. Armando Armas attended PGA's 40th Annual Forum in November 2018, where he brought attention to the deteriorating situation, which the High Commissioner called a “downward spiral with no end in sight.” Following Speaker Guaido’s self-proclamation as President, PGA Members continue to advocate for a transition towards democracy and human rights for all in Venezuela. Most recently, on May 10, 2019, PGA’s global network and Venezuela National Group both issued statements demanding an end to the political persecution of members of the parliamentary opposition by the Maduro regime.

“...a downward spiral with no end in sight”
Most recently, PGA supported its first two members from the **Hong Kong Legislative Council**, Hon. Dennis Kwok and Hon. Alvin Yeung, by helping bring further attention to the peaceful silent marches of legal professionals they continue to organize in support of an independent judiciary, an end to political prosecutions, and restitution of the rule of law. PGA’s global membership mobilized, issuing a formal statement demanding that the Hong Kong government respect its obligations under domestic and international law to respect democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. This international attention has been widely linked to Governor Carrie Lam’s decision to withdraw the controversial extradition bill, although protests continue amid numerous further demands by pro-democracy activists.